



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VIII

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**MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Remedial Project Manager Position for Libby Field Work

FROM: Bert Garcia  
Unit Leader

THROUGH: Dale Vodehnal  
Program Manager

TO: Max H. Dodson  
Assistant Regional Administrator

**Objective**

Conduct a national recruitment to add an RPM (GS-13) to the Libby team dedicated exclusively to field work in Libby. This memo provides supporting rationale for this new position. The new RPM will clean up 200 properties annually and will become an integral part of the community.

**Background**

EPA initially responded to a crisis situation in Libby, doing whatever was necessary with three On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) in response to a scale and type of contamination previously unknown. The response was effective, and necessarily conservative and costly. The Emergency Response Program then handed off the site to the Remedial Program. Since then Jim Christiansen of the Remedial staff has focused his efforts on structuring and prioritizing the work, making the necessary changes to improve efficiency and reduce costs, and, often, saying *no* in an emotionally charged setting. Low priority tasks were set aside. Efficiencies in work methods were created and implemented. Jim has pared down the work to the critical elements. That effort was important to make the response efficient, cost effective, and to move forward as quickly as possible.

The scope of work in Libby makes an additional RPM necessary. Our work ranges broadly among overseeing two enforcement Removal Actions, the operation of a waste material landfill and mine disposal operation, ongoing sampling and analysis to find the extent of

contamination, research into highly complex but critical technical questions, preparing for the clean up of the town of Troy, maintaining the extraordinary pace of the ongoing residential cleanup, and addressing redevelopment concerns. Further, we need to fully transition the work to a long-term strategy.

We now need Jim to focus on the complete transition to a long-term cleanup plan. To do so he needs to complete risk assessment work, complete investigation of contamination in Libby, prepare a feasibility study for the best clean up approach, and write a final agency decision for that approach. So that Jim can apply his institutional knowledge and time to these tasks, it's necessary to provide him help with the full-time field work.

## **Proposal**

The new Field RPM will:

- Reside in Libby;
- Determine which properties to clean, their sequence, and work methods;
- Manage contractors for cleanup, sampling, and analysis;
- Oversee the PRP-lead Removal Actions and operation of the landfill and mine disposal operation;
- Manage issues arising from redevelopment and in nearby Troy;
- With Wendy Thomi, serve as EPA's community interface;
- Respond to external politics; and
- Be sufficiently knowledgeable about Libby to work there in January 2005.  
(Expect a five month learning curve for just the basics.)

Jim will:

- Serve as Team Leader for Peggy Churchill (RPM), Craig Myers (OSC), and the Field RPM;
- Create the overall site strategy;
- Create and allocate the overall site budget;
- Work closely with several EPA Headquarters offices;
- Transition the site fully to the Remedial process as outlined above; and
- Respond to internal politics.

Peggy and Craig will continue with their current responsibilities, with Peggy engaged both in the field and in Denver and Craig conducting the Stimson Lumber Removal Action. (Note that, although she already performs at a very high level, Peggy is a GS-9 and has been with the Agency for seven months.)

## **Costs / Benefits**

### Benefits

An RPM with extensive construction management experience placed in Libby will:

- Save EPA \$200,000 annually (to be redirected toward clean up) by replacing an

FTE we now pay for through an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Transportation Volpe Center;

- Provide the community with a more easily accessible EPA employee who can focus on local matters; and
- Free up Jim so he can write the Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, and Record of Decision, and so he can improve cleanup approaches and standards. EPA will benefit from higher quality documents at a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars (also to be redirected toward clean up) than had a contractor produced these deliverables.

#### Costs

This change will require:

- An additional FTE at the GS-13 Level;
- A vacancy announcement across EPA nationally to find candidates with the best possible experience and knowledge, skills and abilities;
- A PCS move to Libby; and
- Formalization of the Libby team with Jim Christiansen as Team Leader.

#### **Items to Accomplish or Resolve**

Item	Resolution	Responsibility
FTE	EPR will provide	EPR IO
National Recruitment	Need SLT concurrence	Max and Wanda
KSAs	In draft form	Bert Garcia
PCS Move	Need SLT concurrence	
Team Structure	Change Christiansen to TL	Bert Garcia to draft

**KSAs** (Under development; need to elaborate, describing these in behavioral terms.)

The candidate:

- Manages according to a strategic view of the work. Distinguishes important tasks to prosecute so the work moves forward in parallel rather than sequentially. Isn't distracted by urgent, unimportant matters. Comfortably delegates to others.
- Isn't intimidated nor steam rolled by strong personalities.
- Collaborates with the site team, community, and stakeholders, yet is decisive and leads in a way that people follow and support.
- Becomes a part of the community.
- Explains complex topics in terms anyone understands.
- Masters a knowledge base of Libby asbestos.
- Is experienced in construction and contract management and efficiencies. Applies this knowledge practically.
- Holds, as a personal value, that money spent must receive the highest possible value in return.